



Park and Walk to School

Park and Walk is a brilliant way to encourage parents/carers and their children to add some exercise to their journey to school, learn road safety skills and socialise with other families. It's also a great opportunity for parents and kids to spend some quality time together before and after school.

The idea of 'Park and Walk' simply means driving some of the way to school, parking and then walking the rest of the way. It is ideal for families who live further away from school and can't walk or ride the whole way. It also reduces congestion around the school entrance, making it safer for children to walk and ride to school.

How does it work?

There are two ways in which Park and Walk can work:

1. Parents or carers are encouraged to find a suitable parking spot a few hundred metres away from the school gates. They then walk the rest of the way.
2. Schools can choose official Park and Walk meeting spots that are around a 5 to 10-minute walk from school. This makes it easy for parents to take part, especially if there is a shortage of car parking around school. It's also a great opportunity for parents/carers and their children to meet with others, walk together and chat.

Park and Walk meeting points

The ideal locations for Park and Walk meeting points are empty car parks a few hundred metres from the school which are on a safe walking route. Options include car parks at local parks, ovals, sporting clubs, churches or local supermarkets.

Make sure you ask permission to use the car parks as necessary. You'll find a sample letter at the end of this document that you can use as a guide to request permission from the car park owners. If you're struggling, ask your local government's, active travel, road safety, sustainability or community development officer for help liaising with the organisations who own or control these car parks.

Complementary activities

We have several complementary activities on the Your Move website that can help with your Park and Walk promotion.



Mapping My Journey to School

The '[Mapping My Journey to School](#)' activity is a great complementary activity, where students will use their senses to 'rediscover' their trip to school, creating a personal map that reflects the path they took and all the things they discovered on their journey.

Map Safe Routes to School - Stencil Painting Activity

Another good activity to help identify potential 'Park and Walk' locations near your school is the '[Map Safe Routes to School - Stencil Painting Activity](#)'. In this activity, students complete a site audit of the active transport network around their school, then use the results of the audit to conduct a mapping exercise to identify and mark the most popular 'Safe Routes to School' and 'Park and Walk' points using the [Google 'My Maps' tool](#).

This activity also identifies footpath stencil locations that are marked on the Google map to help create a sense of place while creating fun reminders that your school is within easy walking and riding distance from homes of students living locally.

Walking School Bus

A walking school bus is a school bus powered not by an engine, but by legs. Children don't sit inside this 'bus' – they walk in a group to school, with an adult 'driver' in the front and an adult 'conductor' at the rear.

Starting a walking school bus at your school is a really good fit with a Park and Walk promotion, as the designated 'bus stop' locations can be a convenient point for parents and students to meet up and then walk as a group to school. The [Walking School Bus activity](#) is a fun way for local children to walk to school together regularly with adult volunteers, usually parents, taking turns to walk with the group to school.



Parents, students and volunteers walking together in a 'walking school bus'

Promote and celebrate Park and Walk

To be successful, it's important to let your school community know the details of your Park and Walk scheme. You could order and set up some signs for your Park and Walk meeting points and put up posters around the school to promote the scheme.

We recommend including information in the school newsletter, on your school's website and on the school notice board. You'll find a sample letter at the end of this document that you can use as a guide to inform families.

It's also a good idea to launch the Park and Walk scheme by holding an event day and providing a healthy breakfast for students and tea/coffee for parents. Invite either the Mayor, a local hero or your local government officer to join in the festivities.

You could also thank everyone for participating by providing faction points to students that walk, ride or scoot, or you could go one step further and implement a ['Student Star card' system](#), hand them out on the day and punch their 'Star Card' as they walk through the gate.

Post stories about your Park and Walk promotion on the [Your Move website](#) to earn points. You can then use those points to spend on rewards and tools to continue promoting walking, scooting and riding to school.



A parent walking to school with their child.

Sample letter to car park owners

Dear [add name of contact],

I am writing to you on behalf of [add name of school].

As you may be aware, the school is working very hard to try and reduce congestion at the school gates. It is hoped that by doing this, the school area will be safer, thus encouraging more parents/carers to walk their children to school.

One way in which we are hoping to do this is by setting up a 'Park and Walk' scheme. This is a simple initiative, where parents are encouraged to park their car a 10-minute walk from school and then walk the rest of the way.

We are currently looking for areas where parents may park and wondered if you would be happy for them to use [enter name and location of car park].

We feel this would be a great opportunity for [enter name of company] to support the local community and your organisation would be perceived as a company concerned about the safety of local school children and the environment.

If you are happy to be advertised as a 'Park and Walk' drop-off point, please contact me on [add your contact details] to discuss the scheme in more detail.

Thank you in advance for your support.

[Name of person responsible for Park and Walk scheme]

Sample letter to families

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you might be aware, the school is working very hard to try and reduce congestion at the school gates. It is hoped that by doing this, the school area will be safer, thus encouraging more parents/carers to walk their children to school.

One way in which we are hoping to do this is by setting up a 'Park and Walk' scheme. This is a simple initiative, where parents/ carers are encouraged to park their car a 5 to 10 minute walk from school and then walk the rest of the way.

We appreciate, that some children aren't able to walk to school either due to parental work commitments, distance or a variety of other reasons. This is why we are creating a 'Park and Walk' meeting point – somewhere where you can park your car and walk the last part of the journey to school. This will provide children who have to be driven to school with the opportunity to walk part of their school journey.

We are therefore asking parents to park at [enter name of designated location here] and walk the rest of the way to school. If this designated meeting point isn't suitable for you, we would still encourage you to find an alternative area to park 5 to 10 minutes from school and walk your children the rest of the way.

If you have any queries regarding the Park and Walk meeting point, please don't hesitate to speak to [enter the name of the school champion].

Thank you for your continuing support.

[Name of Principal]